GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:347
ANSWERED ON:05.09.2012
OBECTIONABLE CONTENTS ON INTERNET
Viswanathan Shri P.;Yadav Shri Om Prakash

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the obscene, anti-social, anti-national and hate contents are reported to have been uploaded on various social/internet sites both within the country and outside and some of them, even inciting violence and if so, the details thereof;

(b) the preventive measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) the details of self regulation code/best practices/statutes in the country and those in major foreign countries, with regard to Social Sites;

(d) whether the Government monitors all internet traffic along with the encrypted data online; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not. the action taken by the Government to have access to all internet traffic and encrypted data of blackberry services alongwith the instructions issued to telecom and internet service providers in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL)

(a) to (e) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 347 FOR 05.09.2012 REGARDING OBJECTIONABLE CONTENTS ON INTERNET

a): Recently, Government noted a concerted effort to incite communal passions by circulating provocative lips and photographs on social networking sites and through SMS and MMS. These messages and clips were irculated to vitiate the communal harmony throughout the country. The law enforcement agencies also jported a similar concerted effort through the social networking media. Bulk of the content was in the form of hotographs and clips, which were morphed by mixing different unrelated events and portraying them as an nslaught on a particular Community in My an mar and India. This led to inciting violence and vitiating the j>mmunal atmosphere. Initial response from international social networking sites indicated that such content as to a significant extent emanating from outside the country.

B): Government has taken the following preventive measures in this regard :

Issued an advisory on 17 ` August 2012 to all the intermediaries including national and international social networking sites, advising them to take necessary action to disable inflammatory and hateful content hosted on their websites on priority basis.

Issued an order to block bulk SMS and MMS for 15 days as well as block MMS having an attachment of more than 25 Kilo Bytes.

Based on the request of law enforcement agencies, the Competent Authority under section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 issued direction for blocking of 310 webpages/URLs carrying such antisocial, anti-national and hateful content.

Issued a Press Note titled `Government Blocks 245 web Pages for Inflammatory Content hosting of Provocative and Harmful Content Being Monitored Continuously`

The Government is in regular dialogue with the intermediaries including social networking sites for effective and efficient disablement of such content.

Awareness campaign on this issue.

c): Internet today is one of the most popular information dissemination medium, where all kinds of iformation is uploaded. To prevent the misuse of Internet, Government is involved in building/updating both ga! and technical safeguards.

Information Technology (Intermediaries guidelines) Rules, 2011 notified under Section 79 of the Information echnoJogy Act, 2000 provides the due diligence arid guidelines with respect to self regulation to-be observed this regard by intermediaries.

Disablement of the objectionable content is practiced worldwide. The major international social itworking service providers periodically publish report regarding content removal requests made by overnment agencies worldwide. One such major social networking site M/S Google Inc. has published oogle Transparency Report for the period January-June 2011 regarding content removal requests made by overnment agencies worldwide. It is published that during this 6-month period Google received 68 such quest from India, 92 from USA, 88 from South Korea 8S, 224 from Brazil, 125 from Germany 125 etc. hese international social networking sites publish a policy on their websites advising their users not to .iblish/host such unlawful or hateful content. Many Governments have brought out statutes and directives to ldress the issue of harmful content appearing on intermediary`s computer resource. European Union, USA, UK, New Zealand, Malaysia, etc. have directives and laws making hosting of such content an offence.

d) and (e): No. Sir. The Telecom Service Providers provide facilities for lawful interception and monitoring ` communication flowing through their network in accordance with provisions of the Indian Telegraph Act,l885 and the Information Technology Act, 2000 and as per the terms and conditions of their license agreements. The upgradation of lawful interception and monitoring facilities is a continuous process and is viewed from time to time. There are certain communications, which are encrypted by the Solution Service providers of the services. The Telecom Service Providers are not supposed to know the content of any commmunication and, therefore, do not know whether a service is encrypted or not. This is known by the law enforcement agencies only when the stream of encrypted content is delivered to them through the facility of lawful interception and monitoring provided by Telecom Service Providers. However, the law enforcement agencies may not be able to decrypt all the intercepted encrypted messages.

The Government regularly interacts with Telecom Service Providers and Solution Service Providers including Blackberry to address the issue and implement the solution to the extent possible keeping in view security, service and developmental needs of the country.